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A GREAT F(E)AST OF LANGUAGES:

THE (UN)TRANSLATABILITY OF SHAKESPEARE'S BAWDY WORDPLAY INTO ROMANIAN

Doctoral Candidate:

ANCA-SIMINA MARTIN

Doctoral Supervisor:

Prof. SILVIA FLOREA, Ph.D.

SIBIU

ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

The capacity to produce wordplay is an inherent property of every natural language. Cross-linguistic research has shown that puns rely on (near-)universal lingual mechanisms, such as homonymy, homophony, and paronymy, meaning that texts written in both synthetic and analytic languages can accommodate more than one interpretation of a particular word or phrase. Although much has been said about intralingual ambiguity throughout the history of linguistics, the study of wordplay in the context of translation is, however, still very much in its infancy, with the most influential studies of the topic examining how sacred and fictional works travel across languages. Primary among the fiction texts featured in such articles are William Shakespeare's most problematic plays and sonnets in terms of pun translation. This hardly comes as a surprise, considering that William Shakespeare is one of the most inveterate punsters in the history of world literature, whose instances of wordplay Dr. F. A. Bather, for instance, estimated to amount to a total of 1,062.

As for the bawdy variety of his puns, it has constituted the object of much scholarly interest ever since the dawn of Shakespearean scholarship in the eighteenth century, yet with the exception of a few dissident voices, the prevalence of this language device in Shakespeare's sonnets and plays was, in many a case, harshly criticized or rationalized out of either prudishness or ignorance or both. However, an account of the evolution of the critical discussions of this instance of Shakespearean language—from a synchronic perspective at least—would not be complete if sufficient attention was not paid to the manner in which the Great Vowel Shift, the socio-political and cultural realities of the playwright's time as well as the condition of the theatre industry in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods impacted on Shakespeare's use of titillating wordplay.

Shakespeare established himself as one of London's most popular playwrights at a time when Early Modern English, was experiencing what Hotchkiss and Robinson aptly describe as "one of the most momentous internal changes in its history"—the Great Vowel Shift (6). As the name suggests, this process implied a series of alterations brought to how English long stressed vowels were pronounced. However, "in Shakespeare's time not all of these changes had made their way into writing" (K. Johnson 230), which subsequently led to numerous spelling variants in print (Baugh and Cable 207). This was also a time when large-scale word borrowings from numerous languages and English dialects were triggered by emigration on the one hand and immigration on the other. It is on the background of this

"rapid emergence of synonyms" (Adamczyk 2013a: 10) that a "differentiation in usage as well as in meaning and connotation" was made. In turn, this "was eminently favourable to punning" (Kökeritz 1953: 54) and, in turn, to Shakespeare's pursuit to quench the thirst for witticism of his diverse audience.

If nowadays theatregoing is regarded as an "elegant affair" (Mularski, Modern Theatre section, para. 4) and drama performances as "sophisticated expression[s] of a basic human need . . . to create meaning through narrative and metaphor" (Shalwitz, para. 3), in Shakespeare's period, the theatre was perceived as a form of entertainment the likes of bearbaiting rings and cockfight pits. By the time he became a household name in the industry, theatres had already been banished outside the city walls on the official grounds that they could have acted as potential sources for yet another plague outbreak (MacKay 85). Such a decision would have been unanimously considered as a necessary precaution if it had not had an additional agenda as well. Their relocation marked, in fact, the peak of an extensive anti-theatre lobby conducted by the Puritans, who deplored the "wanton gestures . . . bawdy speeches" made on stage (qtd. in Glyn-Jones 269). Little did they realise or care to acknowledge that it was quite the other way: the expectations of the audience dictated their presence and not vice-versa. However, there is nothing to imply that Shakespeare, in particular, met them, as Robert Bridges assumes, "with a sense of self-abasement or of condescension" (Wells 2010: 1).

In his works, bawdy wordplay comes in different shapes and sizes and textually serves purposes other than to satisfy refined and popular tastes. There, Shakespeare's characters pun on the homonymy, homophony, paronymy, and polysemy of different words and phrases, with some of these punning members featuring once within the same textual fragment, while others rely for their effect on the simultaneous occurrence of the same term or syntagm within a portion of text (Delabastita 1993: 194). According to Eric Partridge, they can be further categorised depending on the category of bawdy expression. He differentiates, for example, between non-sexual, homosexual, and sexual ribaldry (9-12; 13-18; 19-52). As for their functions, Georgi Niagolov suggests that some are supposed to have a jocular effect on the audience, while others "seem to go beyond [their] bounds," occurring in tragic and moralistic contexts (5). These taxonomies are, however, of relatively recent date, since for many centuries, Shakespeare scholars had primarily followed in the Puritans' footsteps.

Many attempts have been made, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to overlook, censor, or otherwise rationalise the dramatist's (over)indulgence in

bawdy wordplay, with the most illuminating example in this regard being the Bowdlers' *The Family Shakespeare*, an expurgated edition of his works. What they sought, and ultimately achieved, was to turn "classical but problematic texts into icons of moral rectitude" (Miller 100) by taking the axe to his ribald puns. This would set the tone for a censorship campaign that would last nearly a century, and their name has since become eponymous with all attempts to tailor Shakespeare's style according to mores other than those of his period.

The rediscovery of Shakespeare's ribald vocabulary in 1947, when Partridge published *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, marked its Renaissance. As Gordon Williams aptly puts it, "it is Eric Partridge who best represents that return swing of the pendulum after the discomfort experienced by Victorian critics" (1996: 13). Even so, this shift in attitude towards Shakespeare's ribaldry happened gradually, as early scholars, Partridge included, "evaded frankness by using Latinisms . . . for the female sexual organs" (Wells 2010: 1). Another forty years would pass before a thoroughly unapologetic approach to it was adopted, as is evident from Frankie Rubinstein's *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance*. Meanwhile, in Romania, a more complicated relationship with Shakespeare's bawdy language was being cultivated. Neither during the communist era nor before its installation, his ribald vocabulary was, a study by Romanian Shakespeare scholar and translator George Volceanov suggests, deliberately toned down. Quite to the contrary, as he has found that, in some cases, several of its Romanian counterparts far exceeded Shakespeare's level of bawdry. Apart from these instances, many others have been lost in translation, falling victim to factors other than politically dictated censorship (Volceanov 2005: 120). Fifty years after the last complete Romanian edition of Shakespeare's works, Volceanov delivered a paper in Utrecht, signalling that the time has come for Romanian Shakespeare studies to pick up the pace and strive to align with the progress Anglo-American scholars have made in this direction.

Limitations of Existing Research

The Romanian translation of Shakespeare's bawdy wordplay has of late been partially addressed in five articles: three authored by Shakespeare scholar, translator, and academic George Volceanov, and two papers delivered at international conferences, one jointly by Oana Tatu and Raluca Sinu, and the other by Oana Tatu single-handedly. While they may not be the first Romanian researchers to discuss the existence of an obscene vocabulary and ribald puns in the dramatist's works, it is to them that we owe the emergence of interest in the rendition of these instances of language into Romanian. However, from the very beginning, they come with a series of limitations, for which the article-length size of their studies is primarily responsible. Others, undoubtedly more important, include the fact that some of them only briefly touch upon the subject matter.

Volceanov's 2005 "Bowdlerizing Shakespeare: Here, There and Everywhere," 2006 "Appropriating Shakespeare through Translation," and 2012 "On Shakespeare's Bawdy and Its Translation into Romanian" focus more on the rendition of the playwright's obscene language into this particular target language. In these articles, he references a 2003 study conducted on 306 random indecent words and phrases featured in twenty-nine plays and two poems belonging to Shakespeare. Volceanov counted 179 instances of meaning-for-meaning translation, 93 instances of lost sexual connotations, and 34 instances in which the translators may be said to have surpassed the ingenuity of the original text (2005: 120). Based on this survey, he came to the conclusion that, contrary to popular belief, the Romanian censorship of Shakespeare's works was not part of a wider censorship scheme imposed by the communist regime, but rather a consequence of translator-objective factors such as the scarce Romanian slang and the lack of access to supplementary critical materials, and translator-subjective determinants such as their moral standards, questionable skills, or political status (2005: 120; 2006: 210). To substantiate his theory came the statements made, in 2003, by Sonia Levițchi, the widow of Leon Levițchi, the coordinator of the second complete Shakespeare translation project, according to which no pressure had been made to produce toned-down renditions of his works, as the communist authorities were aware that 'Shakespeare was too great a name to be censored.'

Indeed, the results of his statistical account and the theory to which they gave rise are compelling, yet in the absence of further detail of the critical literature used to select the

corpus, a record of the surveyed words and whether they qualify as wordplay, and the methodology employed to compare these instances of language and their Romanian renditions, Volceanov's study is vulnerable to objections. In contrast, Oana Tatu and Raluca Sinu's 2013 "From Shakespeare to Sitcoms: Translating the Bawdy Wordplay" relies on an explicitly stated body of research strategies and taxonomies—Delabastita's classification of wordplay and competence model—, which is the established methodology for any wordplay translation analysis. Tatu and Sinu are the first Romanian scholars to mention and deploy these frameworks in a study of the rendition of puns into this target language. However, their corpus of Shakespearean wordplay and renditions is rather limited—eight ribald puns from seven plays, five of which are analysed against only one translation of *Pericles* (44), *Henry IV, Part 2*, *King Lear* (47), *The Merchant of Venice* (48), and *The Tempest* (47). In the case of the first two plays, translated for the second time into Romanian in 2018 and 2016 respectively, their absence from Tatu and Sinu's study can be attributed to the fact that their article was published three and five years before the publication of these renditions. The other three plays, however, were available in multiple translations at the time when they were preparing the aforementioned article. Upon compiling the corpus for the present thesis, four more renditions of *King Lear* and five more of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* each, were identified as having been produced before 2013. Also, the two scholars do not distinguish between translations based on intermediaries and the original English texts, which puts the former at a marked disadvantage from the latter. As for Tatu's 2015 paper, "Crossing the Bridge: A Revisitation of the Concept of Translation Equivalence," it focuses solely on the non-bawdy instances of wordplay in Shakespeare's works and does not rest on a methodology widely used to analyse pun translation outcomes.

The present thesis does not aim to discredit their studies. After all, had they not been available, the study herein would not have been endeavoured. Yet, they come with certain limitations that the present thesis aims to overcome. In testing out its hypotheses, it relies on a transparent methodology, which has become standard practice in wordplay translation research, a sizeable corpus of source-text puns and Romanian translations, and submits for analysis only those renditions of Shakespeare that originate in the original English text. Indeed, in so doing, other shortcomings emerge, reviewed at length in the closing remarks of the thesis, which invites other revisitations of the topic, based on other approaches, that may help to overcome them, partially, at the very least.

Scope, Questions and Research Hypotheses

The current doctoral research aims to complement existing research on the translation of William Shakespeare's bawdy puns into Romanian by addressing the limitations of earlier studies of the topic, submitting new hypotheses for analysis, and proposing alternatives for the rendition of his most problematic and recurrent instances of ribald wordplay. Its primary objective is to offer a comprehensive perspective of the subject matter and pave the way for further research and development with significant potential benefits for the Romanian translation of puns in other literary contexts. To this intent, the present thesis focuses on testing out two theories and providing practical answers to three particular research questions.

The theories subjected to assessment posit (1) the absence of any critical discussions of Shakespeare's ribald language and/or bawdy wordplay prior to Volceanov's 2003 analysis of Romanian renditions of his vulgar vocabulary and (2) the possible inapplicability of the findings of said study to the translation of his ribald puns into this target language. The first hypothesis arises from the fact that neither one of the existing articles on the topic mentions the existence of earlier autochthonous inquiries into, or critiques of, this instance of Shakespearean language use in his texts or in translation. The selection of the second theory draws on the very function of this variety of wordplay in Shakespeare's period and works. His rise to notoriety coincided with a turning point in the history of the Elizabethan theatre. The arts and drama, in particular, enjoyed much support among the English Renaissance nobility, yet the same could not be said of the clerics; the Puritan oppression pushed the playhouses to the outskirts of London, the home of bear-baiting rings and brothels, on the unofficial grounds that they promoted an idle and licentious lifestyle. Little did they realise or care to acknowledge that it was quite the other way around: the plays from that period drew their inspiration from real life rather than vice versa. Hence, Shakespeare's extensive use of bawdy puns was, at once, a strategy for circumventing the strict mores of his society and a resourceful dramatic device, whereby he could satisfy the expectations of his heterogeneous audience and engage the attention of his spectators. Since this was also a common practice among Romanian writers under the communist regime, the likelihood of Shakespeare translators producing equally successful renditions of his ribald wordplay is, in turn, potentially higher than in the case of his explicit bawdy language.

As for the research questions of the present thesis, they are related to (a) uncovering the types of bawdy language and wordplay most and least likely to re-emerge in the Romanian translations of Shakespeare produced prior to 1945, during the communist period, and after 1989; (b) comparing and contrasting the two Romanian complete editions of Shakespeare's works, namely the Mihnea Gheorghiu's 1955-1963 'ESPLA' [Editura de Stat pentru literatură și artă] and Leon Levițchi's 1982-1991 'Univers' projects; (c) discovering prerequisites of effective pun rendition other than familiarity with the source texts, the socio-cultural background of the writer, and a proficient command of the source and target languages; (d) analysing the extent to which they are applicable in practice. In addressing the first question, the study starts from the assumption that the renditions produced in the three chronological periods merely reflect the availability and varying degrees of access to supplementary critical materials devoted to this instance of Shakespearean language use. It is expected that the translations released before 1947, when Eric Partridge's *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, the first-ever dictionary of the playwright's ribald vocabulary was published, exhibit the lowest incidence of successful bawdy pun renditions. Based on Volceanov's survey of the Romanian translation of his vulgar vocabulary, the communist renditions are presumed to display a higher frequency of effective wordplay translations. Lastly, the translations produced after 1993, the year in which Dirk Delabastita issued *There's a Double Tongue*, a seminal study of the rendition of non-bawdy and bawdy Hamletian puns, feature the highest number of successfully reproduced ribald wordplay, owing to their unprecedented access to resources on Shakespeare's ribald language and examples of good translational practice in this respect.

Regarding the second research question, the present thesis posits that the 'Univers' edition marks a significant advance in terms of effective pun translation relative to the earlier 'ESPLA' project. This conjecture draws on Iulia A. Milică's statements according to which the "turn towards openness [to the Western world] starting in the middle of the 1960s is more obvious in the 1970s and 1980s" (33), when the former was produced, and that it "display[ed] an [unprecedented] openness towards foreign criticism" (34) as compared to the latter, which fashioned the Shakespearen discourse in line with the dominant Marxist-Leninist ideology of taste and rhetoric. As for the third research question, it surmises the absence of synergy between translators of Shakespeare operating in different chronological periods, a factor that is detrimental to the rendition of wordplay, given the time constraints to which translators are usually subjected. The present study starts from the assumption that Romanian translators are,

more often than not, unaware of the translation solutions provided by their peers in earlier renditions of the plays for which they prepare new translations. While this phenomenon may not be so frequently observed in the case of the translators acting within the same rendition project, which presumes a holistic approach to Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, the likelihood of a low level of familiarity with pun renditions produced within other editions or individual translations is postulated to be relatively high.

Methodology and Corpus

The thesis at hand falls within the scope of cognitive pragmatics and translation studies. The approach to the topic is interdisciplinary, drawing on concepts, frameworks, and instruments such as historiography and sociology—used to chart the reception of Shakespeare's works in different places and time periods; historical linguistics—in the investigation of the relationship between Shakespeare's English and his use of wordplay; semantics and pragmatics—in the examination of bawdy puns in the context of the dramatist's works and the target texts; close reading—in the qualitative analyses of the Romanian translations of Shakespeare's most recurrent and problematic instances of ribald wordplay; and distant reading—in the quantitative section of the present study, which focuses on ascertaining the categories of bawdy and punning most and least likely to re-emerge in Romanian renditions of Shakespeare in the three different chronological periods.

In order to accomplish the research goals set out in the previous section, the thesis rests on two adjusted taxonomies of bawdy and wordplay, devised in 1947 and 1993 by Eric Partridge and Dirk Delabastita respectively. In *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, the former identifies three manifestations of bawdy in the dramatist's works—non-sexual, homosexual, and sexual. Upon compiling the corpus of source-text puns, these classes of ribald language were broken down into nineteen more specific semantic categories as follows: male sex, pudendum, lust, promiscuity, intercourse, cuckoldry, adultery, homosexuality, sex industry, prostitution, procuring, pandering, soliciting, syphilis, podex, flatulence, toilet, bodily functions, and bawdy sarcasm, which is vulgar, albeit non-sexual, in a manner similar to the preceding four types of ribald wordplay. The classification of puns distinguishes, drawing on Delabastita's vertical-horizontal dichotomy, between wordplay that appear once within a textual fragment and rely for their effect on the reader's mental confrontation of the in-text word with its

absent punning homonym, homophone, or paronym, and instances of language-play whose two or more punning words occur in the same portion of text.

As for the translation critical framework, it combines Delabastita's and Tien Suk Sunny's competences models, reproduced in their entirety in Section 3.3. The first was elaborated in the former's 1993 *There's a Double Tongue*, upon analysing the German, Dutch, and French renditions of the bawdy and non-bawdy wordplay in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, while the latter is an adjusted variant of Delabastita's collection of pun translation strategies, formulated with a view to assessing the rendition of the bawdy wordplay in Shakespeare's sonnets into Chinese. The competence model deployed in the present study draws primarily on the latter, with the amendment that it yokes together strategies 1.1. (bawdy pun translated into bawdy pun with the same double meanings), 1.2. (bawdy pun translated into bawdy pun with different double meanings), and 3 (non-bawdy non-pun translated into a compensatory bawdy pun) into PUN > PUN BAWDY, while the use of editorial techniques such as footnotes or endnotes and what Delabastita terms 'punoids,' namely wordplay related rhetorical devices, are subsumed under a single translation strategy titled 'OTHER'. Since the thesis at hand focuses on how ribald wordplay fares when transposed to another language, it is of lesser interest whether the source-text meanings change in translation or if the translator counterbalances their inability to render a source-text pun by inserting new punning material or playing on an otherwise non-punning source-text word. Regarding the language-play translated via other stylistic devices, their ingenuity is duly noted in the qualitative section of the study, yet in the context of the quantitative studies, such rhetorical workarounds were judged as compensatory solutions the likes of explanatory comments. In so doing, the latter analyses emphasize more pronouncedly the frequency of those translation methods that impact on the source-text punning and/or bawdy balance.

In compiling the corpus of source-text puns, the individual editions of Shakespeare's plays published under the imprint of RSC [Royal Shakespeare Company] and annotated by Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate were deployed. The findings were then confronted with the editorial comments provided in other authoritative editions of Shakespeare such as Oxford, Arden, and Cambridge. The primary reason behind this choice is the fact that the RSC collection is the latest printed to date and relies on the most recent studies of the dramatist's ribald wordplay. Frankie Rubinstein's *Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* and Pauline Kiernan's *Filthy Shakespeare*, which are, of late, the only glossaries of the playwright's bawdy wordplay, were not utilized as primary sources in this

respect due to the negative reviews they received from certain very prominent voices in the field, whose concerns are reproduced in the prologues to the qualitative and quantitative sections of the present thesis. What resulted upon confronting said editions of Shakespeare is a total of 673 puns, of which 113 play on the male sex, 74 on the pudendum, 22 on lust, 52 on promiscuity, 236 on intercourse, 16 on cuckoldry, 13 on adultery, 8 on homosexuality, 3 on sex industry, 57 on prostitution, 3 on procuring, 5 on pandering, 14 on soliciting, 23 on syphilis, 10 on the podex, 4 on flatulence, 3 on toilet, 8 on bodily functions, and 3 on bawdy sarcasm. It should, however, be noted that this study focuses solely on the translation of Shakespeare's wordplay as it appears in his 37 canonical plays.

To identify the available Romanian translations of these Shakespearean plays, Alexandru Duțu's "Index of Translations and Adaptations" (221-229), included at the end of his *Shakespeare in Rumania,* has proved a reliable source for the renditions published before 1964, with the exception of one rendition of *All's Well That Ends Well—Toate bune la sfîrşit*—, which he notes to have been published by Fundația pentru literatură și artă [The Foundation for Literature and the Arts] in 1945. According to the year of publication and the publisher, Dragoș Protopopescu may be suspected to have authored it. However, many of his translations have been lost in the mid-1940s, when they were blacklisted and banned from public libraries in order to accommodate a Communist Party-approved Romanian edition of Shakespeare's works. As for the translations released after his monograph, the online catalogue of The Library of the Romanian Academy was extensively utilized. Since the national regulations require every writer and translator to submit a specimen of their works to this library, it was considered, in the absence of an updated list of Shakespeare renditions, the most reliable source of information on the latest releases. Based on these resources, a total of 156 translations and 2,792 source-text pun renditions were identified. Annexes 1 to 37 bring them together with their source-text counterparts in chronological order. In the cases where the 'ESPLA' and 'Univers' renditions coincide, the latter was referenced due to its mentioning the acts and scenes in the top left corner of the page, which simplified the process of identifying target-text pun equivalents. As regards multiple translations of the same play produced by one translator, the Annexes include all the renditions only insofar as they differ in the manner in which particular instances of wordplay were translated.

Thesis Structure

The present thesis is structured into six parts, the first of which analyses the objective and subjective triggers at play in William Shakespeare's predilection for bawdy wordplay and its critical reception in England and Romania, the following two are devoted to a synchronic and diachronic overview of the evolution of the scholarly understanding of wordplay and its potential for translation, and the fourth charts the taxonomies of bawdy, wordplay, and the translation competence models designed specially for the dramatist's ribald puns. As for the case studies sections, the fifth puts forward a series of qualitative and quantitative studies of Shakespeare's bawdy wordplay as translated into Romanian in collective editions and invidiual renditions produced in the pre-communist, communist, and post-communist periods. The specimens for whom no successful translation has of late been provided re-emerge in the sixth chapter, which advances ten rendition alternatives and suggestions for improving existing translations.

Chapter One, titled "William Shakespeare's Bawdy Wordplay: Triggers and Critical Reception," postulates that the playwright's extensive use of ribald puns was elicited by the concurrence of several subjective and objective triggers. The former are analysed in Subchapter 1.1., "Subjective Triggers of Shakespeare's Predilection for Bawdy," and advance the hypothesis that certain biographical elements from the playwright's Stratford-upon-Avon and London years point to an underlying propensity for bawdy. Subchapter 1.2., entitled "Objective Triggers of Shakespeare's Predilection for Bawdy Wordplay," posit that the peculiarities of Early Modern English, the prominent status of the pun in the rhetorical pantheon of the Renaissance, and peer and audience pressure contributed decisively to Shakespeare's notorious (over)indulgence in ribald wordplay. Subchapter 1.3, "Critical Reactions to Shakespeare's Bawdy Wordplay in England," maps the shift in aesthetic attitude towards the dramatist's use of bawdy language in general and ribald puns in particular, which occurred half a century after his passing and culminated with the publication of Thomas and Henrietta Bowdler's heavily expurgated *The Family Shakespeare*. Subchapter 1.4., "Critical Reactions to Shakespeare's Bawdy (Wordplay) in Romania," focuses on exploring the reception of the playwright's obscene vocabulary and ribald puns in the local landscape, from the very first promotional article on the dramatist to the reviews of the latest Romanian edition of Shakespeare's works. Apart from exploring the subjective and objective factors conducive to the playwright's propensity for bawdy puns, this chapter aims, on the one hand,

to highlight areas of relative alignment of the autochthonous critical thought on the dramatist's bawdy and ribald wordplay with the English scholarly discourse and, on the other, to emphasize the urgency of a comprehensive translational study of the phenomenon.

Chapter Two, titled "A Theoretical Framework of Wordplay," focuses on clarifying the concept of pun. Subchapter 2.1., "The Fuzziness of Ambiguity, Vagueness, Equivocation, and Wordplay," compares and contrasts the surveyed phenomenon in relation to other language universals with which it is either closely associated or believed to be contiguous. The following subchapter, "Towards a Definition of Wordplay," maps the evolution of the theoretical discussions of the pun, which have culminated with the modern understandings of the phenomenon discussed in Section 2.2.2., titled "Modern Theories and Conceptualisations of Wordplay." The final subchapter, "Wordplay Classifications," offers a chronological overview of the most notable attempts to categorise puns, upon which the classifications in Section 2.3.2., "Modern Taxonomies of Wordplay," primarily draw. The general purpose of this chapter is to chart the establishment of wordplay as a standalone topic of theoretical interest and to bring together the earliest and most recent contributions in this respect, which are rarely compiled in a single study of the phenomenon.

Chapter Three, "The (Un)Translatability of Wordplay: Translation Theories and Strategies," discusses the various scholarly perspectives on the potential of puns to travel effectively across languages and cultures. Subchapter 2.1., titled "Translational and Transnational Perspectives on Wordplay (Un)Translatability", is devoted to the most extreme and moderate views on the untranslatability of puns, the latter of which paved the way for the theory detailed in Section 3.1.2, according to which wordplay translatability ought to be construed as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. Subchapter 3.2., "An Overview of Wordplay Translation Theories," reviews three different approaches to pun rendition, which originate in the most influential theoretical frameworks of translation—Eugene Nida's formal vs. functional equivalence, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's relevance theory, and Hans Vermeer's skopos theory. The goal of this chapter is to map the evolution of critical discussions of the (un)translatability of wordplay and to underline the many critical arguments in favour of its potential for rendition offered by the most compelling of voices in translation studies.

Chapter Four, titled "William Shakespeare's Bawdy Wordplay: Taxonomies and Translation Strategies," is intended as a continuation of Chapters Two and Three, in that it investigates the categorisations of wordplay (Subchapter 4.2., "Anachronistic and Modern

Classifications of Shakespeare's Wordplay"), and the translation strategies (Subchapter 4.3., "Competence Models for the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay") originating in the previously explored taxonomies of the pun and theories of rendition and devised upon investigating the translation of Shakespeare's ribald wordplay. Subchapter 4.1., "Representations of 'Bawdy' in Shakespeare's Works," analyses Eric Partridge's acceptation of the term in the context of the dramatist's *oeuvre* and charts his understanding of its semantic manifestations. The general purpose of this chapter is to introduce the classifications of ribald language and puns as well as the competence models constituting the foundation of the adjusted model deployed in the present thesis.

Chapter Five, "Qualitative and Quantitative Studies of the Romanian Translations of Shakespeare's Bawdy Wordplay," yokes together the nineteen categories of ribaldry identified upon compiling the corpus of source-text puns into five larger classes as follows: male and female-specific sexual organs (Subchapter 5.1.1.)—male sex, pudendum; hetero- and homoerotic intercourse (Subchapter 5.1.2.)—intercourse, homosexuality; adultery and promiscuity (Subchapter 5.1.3)—lust, promiscuity, cuckoldry, and adultery; sex industry and venereal diseases (Subchapter 5.1.4.)—sex industry, pandering, procuring, prostitution, solicitors, syphilis; bodily functions (Subchapter 5.1.5.)—podex, flatulence, toilet, bodily functions, and bawdy sarcasm. The qualitative studies conducted therein focus on the most problematic and recurrent instances of Shakespearean wordplay, and in providing a cognitive-pragmatic account of their translation process, said analyses aim to uncover prerequisites of successful pun rendition other than familiarity with the source text, the socio-cultural background of the author, and the source and target languages. Subchapter 5.2., "Wordplay in Collective Editions and Individual Translations," debuts with a study of the socio-political factors that may have impacted on the translation of the ribald wordplay featured in the most frequently rendered Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*. The subsequent sections verify the findings of this subchapter by comparing and contrasting the translation strategies deployed in the four Romanian editions of Shakespeare produced to date in relation to one another and the individual renditions released around the same time. Subchapters 5.4.1. and 5.4.2. aim to identify the categories of bawdy and wordplay most and least likely to re-emerge in Romanian translation in three different chronological periods—before 1945, the year in which the Soviet censorship campaign commenced, during the communist rule, and after 1989, when the former regime collapsed. What these quantitiative analyses set out to achieve is to illustrate how the Romanian renditions of Shakespeare's ribald puns reflect not only the level

of availability and accessibility of supplementary critical materials devoted to this topic, but also the social anxieties and political backgrounds against which they were produced. Also, it seeks to demonstrate how the results of previous studies carried out abroad on the translation of audiovisual wordplay are contiguous with the findings of the analyses conducted on literary puns originating in the works of an author far removed chronologically from the present time.

Chapter Six, "Translation Alternatives and Suggestions for Improving Existing Renditions," explores how the findings of the previous two chapters may contribute to a higher rate of effectiveness in terms of maintaining a positive bawdy punning balance in the Romanian translation of Shakespeare. Subchapter 6.1. revisits eight of the source-text puns found in the qualitative section to have not of late been successfully translated into Romanian and advances new target-language variants for them. Conversely, Subchapter 6.2. puts forward novel rendition solutions for two bilingual instances of source-text wordplay that have not been rendered into Romanian. Each case study is accompanied by a deconstructivist account of the decision-making process leading up to the proposed translation alternative. By employing available renditions as frameworks for new translations, this chapter aims to highlight how, in a surprisingly high number of cases, the novel renditions bring only minimal alterations to their predecessors.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study on the translation of Shakespeare's bawdy wordplay into Romanian complements and enhances existing research on the topic in the following ways: (1) it is the first attempt at charting Romanian critical views on the dramatist's use of ribald language and puns; (2) it rests on a comprehensive corpus of 673 source-text puns, 2,792 wordplay renditions, and 156 translations of Shakespeare's plays; (3) it puts forward an updated methodological framework, which draws on previous authoritative models—Delabastita's taxonomy of horizontal-vertical puns, Tien's adjusted competence model, and Partridge's classification of bawdy; (4) it links translational approaches to Shakespeare's ribald wordplay to the translator-subjective and objective factors, ranging from their personal background to the ideological backdrop of their period; (5) it offers a detailed analysis of the translation of the playwright's most recurrent or problematic instances of bawdy wordplay; (6) it compares

and contrasts the four Shakespeare editions published thus far, both against one another and other individual translations released during the same chronological periods; (7) it provides a hierarchy of the categories of bawdy and wordplay most and least likely to survive rendition into Romanian in three different chronological periods—the pre-communist, communist, and post-communist eras; and (8) it proposes ten possible translation alternatives or suggestions for improvement of existing renditions in the case of several of Shakespeare's most recurrent or problematic puns.

One of the primary hypotheses tested out in this thesis posited the absence of autochthonous critical commentaries of Shakespeare's ribald puns and their translation into Romanian. Upon analysing monographs and collective works authored or coordinated by esteemed Romanian Shakespeare scholars and translators such as Alexandru Duțu, Dan Grigorescu, and Leon Levițchi, this preliminary assumption was refuted by the very first promotional article on the playwright's works, Cezar Bolliac's1863 *Șakespear* [Shakespeare], where the critic, inspired by Victor Hugo's defence of the dramatist and other more or less contemporary apologiae of Shakespeare, notes how he is "at once sublime in his tragism, comedy, and fantasy; his faults were those of his age and not his own" (qtd. in Grigorescu 49, translation mine). The same investigation has revealed that the first critical account of the translation of Shakespeare's bawdy language and wordplay appeared forty-four years later, in 1907, when Garabet Ibrăileanu, an admirer of the playwright and a fervent supporter of his translation into Romanian, deplores Haralamb G. Lecca's rendition of *Rom*., where, Ibrăileanu observes, the translator "summed up those *concetti* [conceits], often of a questionable taste for the moderns, but characteristical of Shakespeare," opting instead to interfere with the source text and domesticate Juliet into "a heroine of *Noaptea furtunoasă* [I. L. Caragiale's satirical 'A Stormy Night'], albeit a crazed one . . . a suburbanite who has gone mental" (479-481, translation mine, original emphasis). Forays such as these into Romanian scholarly perspectives of the playwright's style and translation have shown that *autochthonous interest in Shakespeare's use of ribald puns and vocabulary and its rendition into Romanian far precedes George Volceanov's 2003 academic paper delivered in Utrecht, previously thought to be the first attempt at drawing critical attention to these topics.*

Another theory submitted for investigation in the present study was Volceanov's finding whereby the Romanian communist translations of Shakespearean bawdy words and phrases are not indicative of any external attempt to censor this endeavour. This hypothesis was, in turn, expanded to include an assessment of the impact of translator-objective and

subjective factors on the rendition of Shakespeare's ribald puns, with special focus on the translators operating and the translations produced in the pre-communist and communist periods. The present study has demonstrated that socio-political and subjective factors may exert an equally significant influence not only on this task but also on the evaluation of translational outcomes. Two cases best illustrate this finding: Dragoș Protopopescu's and Adolphe Stern's renditions. In Sections 5.1.1. and 5.3.1., it is argued that the former's far-right political leanings against the onset of the communist regime and his dependence on royalty-owned publishing houses led not only to his untimely demise and subsequent ban from public libraries but also to an interventionist approach to the Shakespearean text. His rendition of *Ham*. is the only of the identified eleven to expurgate two bawdy exchanges between Hamlet and Ophelia and two other lines, one of each of the two characters. The analysis of his surviving nine translations against the renditions produced by the three most prolific early translators of Shakespeare—the Ghica brothers and Adolphe Stern—has indicated that the frequency of ribald puns in his translations is 6% higher than in Stern's. This result, coupled with their nearly equal rate of successfully bawdy wordplay reproductions and the higher incidence of puns rendered via the PUN > NON-PUN BAWDY strategy in Stern's translations not only reinforces this theory but also testifies to the bias Daniela M. Marțole identifies in contemporary reviews of Stern's renditions. *Lawyer Stern's recreating roughly as many ribald puns as Protopopescu, an English professor, almost sixty years later is indicative of the former's familiarity with Shakespeare's ribald puns and vocabulary, which contemporary critics overlook due to his Jewish origins and lack of formal training, while the higher frequency of PUN > ZERO renditions in the latter's translations points to the existence of negative translator-subjective and objective influences*.

In contrast, the 'ESPLA' and 'Univers' editions appear to have not been as vulnerable to limitative external factors. In concrete terms, the present study neither confirms nor invalidates Volceanov's 2003 survey. It does, however, reproduce it, while also addressing its methodological shortcomings. Indeed, as compared to Protopopescu's renditions, the translations produced within the 'ESPLA' project exhibit a higher number of successfully reproduced instances of source-text wordplay and a greater incidence of ribald puns translated via the PUN > NON-PUN INNOCENT and PUN > ZERO strategies. 'Univers', the subsequent communist edition of Shakespeare that sought to divorce Shakespeare from the Marxist-Leninist agenda forced upon him by 'ESPLA', fares slightly better against its predecessor, in that the frequency of source-text wordplay rendered innocently drops, while

the number of puns translated via the PUN > PUN BAWDY and PUN > NON-PUN BAWDY methods increases. *The observable progress 'Univers' recorded as compared to 'ESPLA' is congruent with Milică's theory of the paradoxical relaxation of the censorship grip amidst the most oppressive part of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime (33-34), yet it is not sufficiently significant to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt whether a negative external force affected the preceding edition. The survey conducted on the translations produced by Dan A. Lăzărescu, Nicolae Ionel, and the translators of the latest Shakespeare project validate, on the other hand, George Volceanov's criticism of Lăzărescu's questionable skills, as his renditions amount to the largest share of ribald puns rendered via the PUN > NON-PUN INNOCENT and PUN > ZERO strategies.*

In order to provide insight into the manner in which different categories of bawdy and wordplay behaved when translated into Romanian during three major chronological periods, a series of quantitative analyses have been undertaken. They address the third question of the present study, which concerns the classes of ribald language and puns most and least likely to re-emerge in Romanian translations of Shakespeare. As summarized in the quantitative studies section, *it has been found that, of the nineteen types of bawdy delineated here, intercourse, male sex, and pudendum differentiate themselves as featuring in the hierarchy of source-text classes of bawdy that both successfully translate into Romanian and vanish from renditions into this target language, with or without their textual surroundings, in all the three chronological periods submitted for investigation—the pre-communist, communist, and post-communist eras.* Other such categories include prostitution, which features among the types of bawdy to survive translation most frequently in the communist and post-communist periods, and among the classes of ribald language most likely to disappear from translations in the pre-communist era. This finding does not constitute a surprise in the case of the renditions produced nowadays, yet its emerging in two contrasting hierarchies in the pre- and communist periods is particularly interesting, as both eras fervently condemned industries and professions lying at the fringe of morality.

As for the types of wordplay—vertical and horizontal—that are most and least likely to survive translation, *the studies conducted on the translations produced in all of the three chronological periods indicate an overall tendency of horizontal or syntagmatic puns to lend themselves better to translation than the vertical*. This finding is congruent with the main conclusion of Katri Virta's study; upon analysing the translation of audiovisual wordplay into Finnish, a language genetically unrelated to English, she has found that vertical puns are

"harder to recognise and re-create than horizontal puns" (71), which compel translators to reproduce the in-text confrontation of form and sense between the two punning members. Conversely, *the same inquiries have revealed that vertical or paradigmatic wordplay is more likely to not emerge in target texts*. Nakita Verbruggen's inquiry into the rendition of English audiovisual puns into the historically related Flemish-Dutch language has uncovered that "vertical wordplay [is] easier to translate than horizontal wordplay" and since her finding does not apply in this case, the result above comes to reinforce the crucial role genetic kinship between source and target language play in the translation of vertical wordplay.

As stated previously, the importance of factors such as the translator's proficient command of both the source and target language, their familiarity with the socio-cultural milieu of the author and the particularities of their *oeuvre* have been duly observed by many pun rendition researchers. *What the analyses undertaken in the qualitative section of this thesis have shown is that a translator's awareness of the translation solutions offered by their peers within the same or other rendition projects is also of paramount importance in surmounting the difficulties posed by wordplay with a low degree of translatability*. Also, it has been found that translators are rarely consistent in their own rendition approach, providing successful pun translations in one play and failing to find an equivalent for a variant of the same wordplay in another play. It may very well be that this is a repercussion of translator-objective factors such as time constraints, as there are cases—admittedly very few—where translators appear to have researched early renditions of the Shakespearean texts they take upon themselves to re-render. However, the rarity of these occurrences signals the urgency to do so more frequently in the future.

In the section devoted to translation alternatives and suggestions for improvement of existing renditions, it has been shown how several of Shakespeare's most problematic or recurrent puns can successfully be recreated in contemporary Romanian, a target language far removed historically and genetically from the playwright's Early Modern English. The analyses carried out within this subchapter have revealed a series of missed opportunities to rework earlier translation solutions offered by other translators, with a view to reproducing source-text puns with a low degree of translatability. These alternatives are theoretically more successful in preserving the original double meaning, in that they re-enact the confrontation of form and/or meaning in the source wordplay, yet the absence of an applied study on a sample of proficient and novice readers of Shakespeare does not permit to argue beyond any reasonable doubt that the new target-text counterparts are indeed more effective in

maintaining both the jocularity and the bawdy substratum. They do, however, reinforce the importance of researching earlier renditions and deploying dictionaries of the standard and colloquial Romanian language in the pursuit of polysemic words with a potential for punning.

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